The National Heritage Fellowships 1992

THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS 1992

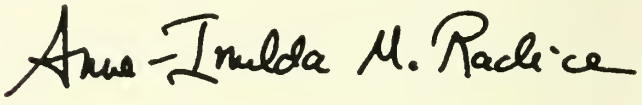
THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS
FOLK ARTS PROGRAM

The National Heritage Fellowships were created 11 years ago through the vision, leadership, and determination of former Folk Arts Program Director, Bess Lomax Hawes, who retired from federal service earlier this year. On the occasion of the first Heritage celebration in 1982, she wrote:

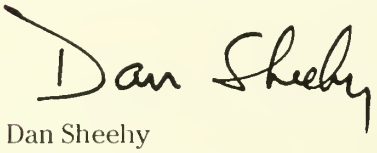
"Being host to an extraordinary number of human beings from different parts of the world, we in the United States are thereby hosts to an extraordinary number of mature and developed artistic and technical traditions. What a privilege. It is this that the Folk Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts celebrates through its National Heritage Fellowships... We believe that this can continue far into the future, each year's group of artists demonstrating yet other distinctive art forms from the American experience."

Her belief was well founded. This year's 13 honored artists, selected from the over 200 nominations submitted, brings the total number of Heritage Fellows to 153. They include superlative representatives of artistic traditions familiar and unfamiliar, from cities and small towns, from different pieces of our national cultural mosaic. The 1992 Fellows span the length and width of the continent—from Alaska to Mississippi, from Connecticut to California. The art forms they practice range from ancient ceremonial regalia of Menominee American Indians, to centuries-old Southern Anglo pottery, to the music of more recent immigrants from South India and Tadjikistan. As such, the National Heritage program has become a process of discovery—of each and every one of us discovering the best of our own particular artistic heritage passed down through family and community, while at the same time discovering other, less familiar artistic legacies that grace our national cultural landscape.

National Heritage Fellows are selected based on three criteria: authenticity of style, excellence of artistry, and significance within their artistic tradition. Recommendations by the Folk Arts Advisory panel are reviewed by the National Council on the Arts and the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Each individual has thus been judged to be an exemplary artist, to be counted among the absolute best representatives of their tradition. Viewed as a group, the Fellows paint a strikingly vivid picture of our nation's culturally diverse artistic patrimony. We ask you to join us in our applause for the 1992 National Heritage Fellows.



Anne-Imelda Radice
Acting Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts



Dan Sheehy
Director, Folk Arts Program
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Credits

The 1992 National Heritage Fellowships ceremonies were produced for the National Endowment for the Arts, Folk Arts Program by the National Council for the Traditional Arts. The ceremonies were planned and coordinated for NCTA by Claudia Telliho.

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FRANCISCO AGUABELLA

African-American and Anglo-American traditions aside, there has been no tradition of folk music that has had greater impact on 20th-century musical life in the United States than Afro-Cuban music. The first wave of Afro-Cuban immigrants arrived in the late 1940s and early 1950s, a heady time in American jazz and popular music. Dizzy Gillespie incorporated the heavily African rhythms of now legendary Afro-Cuban drummer Chano Pozo into his orchestral creations. American bandleaders created genres of popular dance music such as the cha-cha and rhumba, in imitation of Afro-Cuban traditional forms with similar names. Mongo Santamaria brought his considerable percussive skills to bear on popular music and Latin jazz. One of the earliest of the influential immigrant Afro-Cuban drummers was Francisco Aguabella.

Francisco Aguabella is recognized throughout the United States and in Cuba as a leading master of both sacred and secular Afro-Cuban musical traditions. His highly specialized knowledge of ceremonial music is widely admired, and his skill at performing the complex rhythms of repertoires that accompany Afro-Cuban religious life is unsurpassed in this country. Prior to the large Cuban immigration of 1980, he was one of only two *olu batá* drummers in the U.S. qualified to play a highly sacred type of music called *batá fundamento*. He is looked to as a religious leader, a master of tradition, and as an innovator who has successfully incorporated the sounds, rhythms, and textures of traditional Afro-Cuban folk music into contemporary Latin popular music.

Aguabella specializes in *batá*, a kind of music central to certain sacred Afro-Cuban occasions. No other music of the Americas bears a more striking resemblance to West African music than *batá*. The set of three double-conical drums it employs is a striking replication of the Nigerian Yoruba drum ensemble of the same name. Many of the rhythms closely resemble their African prototypes, and the Afro-Cuban language *lucumí*, in which Aguabella sings, is clearly a derivation of Yoruba. Francisco's special knowledge of *batá* attracted the attention of dance choreographer Katherine Dunham, who invited him to join her company for tours of South America and Europe.

His knowledge of secular forms of Afro-Cuban music is widely respected as well. The most important of these forms is the *rumba*, a complex of several musical genres that evolved in Cuba around the turn of the century. The rumba was the basis of much of the Cuban dance hall music that, in turn, influenced American popular music through American-based dance bands. It bears no resemblance to the ballroom dance rhumba that was inspired by it. The rumba, as Aguabella says "is part of daily life for many Afro-Cubans. It doesn't have to be a special day to play the rumba. We could start a rumba right here with no drum. You could play it here or over there on the wall....Somebody plays the wall and somebody else plays a bottle and perhaps takes a bottle cap and 'ca ca ca ca ca' and starts the rumba."

Aguabella's aim has long been to maintain the integrity of the tradition that he so deeply respects while incorporating it into "crossover'" music aimed at broader audiences. It was his superior musical skill and respect for tradition that led Latin musicians such as Mongo Santamaria, Malo, and Santana to bring him into their groups. Today, Aguabella lives in Los Angeles where he continues to perform and to be a major influence on Latin music.

JERRY BROWN

Eighth-generation potter Jerry Brown was born in 1942 in Sulligent, Lamar County, Alabama. The soil of this far northwest corner of the state is known for it's rich veins of clay prized for pottery making. For many of the small, independent farmers in the area, pottery had long been a way of supplementing the fruits of their farmwork. Jerry's father, Horace "Jug" Brown, moved from Georgia to the area in the early 1930s where he married the daughter of a local potter and had three children. In 1941, "Jug" Brown opened his own pottery shop, in which the entire family worked. "My brother and I were making small pieces back before we started first grade," Jerry once recalled.

When Jerry Brown was 22, his father turned the business over to Jerry and his brother Jack. Then tragedy struck as Jack was killed in an automobile accident and, soon after, the family's pottery equipment was stolen. Jerry gave up pottery for the next 20 years. Then, as pottery savant John Burrison wrote, "His decision to return to pottery in the

Left: Francisco Aguabella, photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Times

Center: Jerry Brown, photo by Melissa Springer

Right: Walker Calhoun, photo by Rob Amberg

early 1980s and build a new Brown pottery at Hamilton in northwestern Alabama was an act of courage and commitment to the craft. It was a risky economic venture that required developing a reputation and clientele virtually from scratch. But it was not long before the word was out that there was another folk potter at work in a tradition that was otherwise dwindling."

When Jerry and his wife Sandra Brown first opened their shop, they had the local market in mind and priced their wares at two dollars a gallon (pricing by the gallon was an established practice). But they soon attracted hardware stores and museum gift shops as customers, and were compelled to adjust their pricing to reflect the amount of work put into each vessel. Local customers continued to buy pitchers, pots, and bowls as they always had; urban and long-distance customers, though, preferred the more decorative churns and face jugs (jugs with humorous, grotesque caricatures of a human face molded into the side).

Today, Jerry Brown is at the zenith of his career. At a time when fewer and fewer of the old potting families continue to practice the trade of their forebears, Jerry Brown is the only folk potter still using a mule-powered clay mill, not because he has to, but because he loves to. He also continues to use the old glazes—Albany slip, Bristol, and ash— and still produces the traditional shapes. He may be seen demonstrating his pottery turning at many festivals and crafts fairs. In recent years, he has been featured as the subject of a documentary film, "Unbroken Tradition," and was the major figure in the "Traditional Pottery of Alabama," an impressive exhibit that toured throughout the state. He and his wife have shared their knowledge with their children, ensuring that Brown's Pottery will have a good chance of enduring another generation or more. In the words of Burrison, Jerry Brown's shop "represents the vitality and continuity of the Southern pottery tradition."

Walker Calhoun

The first two centuries of European settlement in what is now the southeastern United States brought considerable cultural dislocation for the many American Indian groups of that region. But for the Cherokee, the worst was yet to come, when in the 1830s the majority of their people were forced to march from their homeland westward to Oklahoma on what would later be known as " The Trail of Tears." A few Cherokee families avoided the removal by hiding in the remote hollows of the Great Smoky Mountains. One of the hollows of western North Carolina, Big Cove, continues to be the home of Walker Calhoun, a major bearer of the ancient repertoire of his people's songs, dances, customs, and spiritual beliefs.

As a child growing up in the 1920s, Walker Calhoun danced to the ceremonial singing of his half-uncle, Will West Long, a singer, medicine man, and leader of the ceremonial dancing in Big Cove from about 1904 until his death in 1947. Dances and songs celebrated every aspect of life for Calhoun's family and Cherokee neighbors. From harvest and hunt to spiritual protection, the songs validated and strengthened everyday living. They provided the rhythms for both social and sacred dances or expressed grief about a shared, tragic history. Will West Long's singing captured the imagination of the young Walker, and by the time he was nine, he had learned most of Long's repertoire. Calhoun continued to absorb the old man's teachings right up to the time of Long's death, and it was probably inevitable that he would later be thought of as a major cultural and spiritual leader among his people.

In the 1980s, Calhoun came to be recognized as a major cultural leader as other elder leaders passed away and he actively worked to sing and maintain his people's song repertoire. He founded the Raven Rock Dancers among his family members to keep the traditional dances a part of his community's life. In 1982, a tape of Long recorded in 1927 by German ethnologist Franz Obrechts on a wax cylinder was given back to the Cherokee by the Library of Congress. Hearing the tape 62 years later further sparked Walker's memories of ancient songs and further strengthened his resolve to keep the old dances and songs alive as his family and people face the future.

Today, Walker Calhoun is widely recognized as a keeper of ancient

Cherokee traditions. He frequently travels to Oklahoma to share his knowledge with his Cherokee brethren and in turn, Oklahoma Cherokee have traveled to North Carolina to reintroduce the Stomp Dance that survived in the West. At a gathering of the Eastern and Western Bands of Cherokee in 1988 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Trail of Tears, Walker was presented the first Sequoyah Award in recognition of his contributions to the folklife of the Cherokee Nation. In 1990, he was presented with the State of North Carolina's Folk Heritage Award. To honor Walker Calhoun is to honor the arts and the Cherokee Nation; he has devoted his life to both.

Clyde Davenport

For the uninitiated, Anglo-American string music of the Appalachian mountain range is often mistakenly thought of as a single tradition, a single style of music. In reality, the region is historically a mosaic of localized musical traditions, each with its own distinctive repertoire, subtleties of technique, and individual master musicians. One such tradition is that of the Cumberland Plateau of south-central Kentucky, a western expanse of Appalachia marked by ridges and rugged terrain, one of the longest-enduring bastions of unique old-time music firmly rooted in the early 19th century.

Clyde Davenport, master fiddler and banjo player in the Cumberland tradition, was born in 1921 and raised in the Blue Hole Hollow of Wayne County. His first serious musical interest was in the banjo. His father Will had played the banjo, as had his father before him. At age eleven, Clyde took the iron band off a small wagon wheel, trimmed out a

green hickory hoop, bolted the ends together with a slat, and set it up to season. He paid a dime for a groundhog hide, attached it to the frame with carpet tacks, carved out a long hickory neck, and he had his first banjo. In his mid-teens, he first heard the music of the widely-admired fiddle and banjo duo of Blind Dick Burnett and Leonard Rutherford, perhaps the greatest single musical influence of his life. Clyde particularly admired Rutherford's smooth, long-bowing technique typical of the region. In his words: "It was just like it was greased. There wasn't a scratch or noise of no kind. Just clear as a bell...." His attraction to Rutherford's flawless technique led him eventually to make the fiddle his instrument of choice.

In the opinion of Joe Wilson, director of the National Council for the Traditional Arts, "Clyde Davenport is now the great exemplar of the Cumberland style, and some local players think he is the best ever. That is a considerable compliment in a place where memory is long and carried in families, and where fiddlers who have been deceased for most of this century are often discussed and players know which tunes and techniques came down from them." He also possesses a formidable musical memory and is the keeper of many rare tunes which came to him from his father, who attributed much of his own repertoire to a man named Will Phipps, who was born in 1829, and used to bring his banjo to the Davenport farm to play with Clyde's father. The songs include "Gettin' up the Stairs," "One-Eyed Rosie," and "Zolly's Retreat," the latter commemorating the Confederate retreat after the nearby battle of Mill Springs. Clyde's fiddling grandfather was a Union soldier who helped defeat the forces of General Felix "Zolly" Zollicoffer on that occasion. He has many such pieces in his repertoire that are now very rare.

For many, the most rewarding aspects of Clyde Davenport are his role in disseminating his music to audiences nationwide and his immense generosity as a teacher. He has performed at countless festivals, including the National Folk Festival, the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, and the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes in Seattle. His music is found on many recordings, the most recent of which are *Clydeoscope* and *Gettin' Up the Stairs* on the County label. As a teacher, he has selflessly passed on his musical heritage by welcoming countless visitors to his home in Monticello, Kentucky, and allowed them to take away with them recordings and memories of his knowledge, technique, repertoire, and outlook. "Anybody comes here who wants my music can get it...Anybody that wants to come, they're welcome."

Left: Clyde Davenport, photo by C. Bruce Shwartz, M.D.

Center: Belle Deacon, photo by Barry McWayne

Right: Nora Ezell, photo by Patricia Miklik

Belle Deacon

Historically, the Alaskan Athabaskan people occupied the central interior reaches of the Yukon River System, some seven tribal divisions spread over a vast territory that extended to the shores of Cook Inlet near modern-day Anchorage. Distantly related Athabaskan-speaking groups stretch far to the south and include the Apache and Navajo of the Southwest. Primarily semi-nomadic hunters, trappers, and fishermen in pre-European times, Alaskan Athabaskans were well adapted to the harsh climactic extremes prevailing throughout interior Alaska and northern Canada. One of the natural materials most vital to Athabaskan daily life was birch bark, which was used to fashion a variety of objects including canoes, baby carriers, spoons, and several shapes and sizes of baskets and other containers.

Belle Deacon was born in 1906 in Anvik, a village on the lower Yukon River. She learned to fashion birch bark and willow root baskets from her grandmother. "My grandmother was making baskets, and I looked at her. They never really showed us because we just look at them, and we follow because it's Indian style that you're not supposed to show your handwork to nobody. You have to do it on your own. When I was young, all the old people made baskets."

Mrs. Deacon gathers her own materials for her baskets, traveling from home in late springtime when the sap is flowing and the birch bark is soft and malleable. In the fall, she leaves her home in Grayling to go by boat and camp out for a few days in order to dig the willow roots, used for the basket rims, from the sandy stream banks. "It's hard work," she says. "You couldn't buy the roots from nobody." The bark is heated, bent into shape, and sewn together with spruce root. The sewing technique is paramount to making a good basket; round containers are expected to be waterproof. Mrs. Deacon's stitching and finishing is not only a finely-honed skill, but through her hands, a medium of aesthetic prowess. Anthropologist Shirley Hauck elaborates: "The artistry of her work is especially evident in the dyed willow root wrapping she uses as edge finishing. Her black and white checkerboard geometric edging alternates with red and blue or yellow and green wraps, all colored with natural dyes. These edgings produce a stunning contrast for the plain, carefully-stitched bark sides."

Belle Deacon's works have been featured in the Anchorage Historical and Fine Arts Museum's "Contemporary Native Art of Alaska" exhibit, "Interwoven Expressions: Works by Contemporary Alaska Native Basket Makers" mounted by the University of Alaska Museum and the Institute of Alaska Native Arts, and the symposium and exhibit "Pacific Basket Makers: A Living Tradition." In 1983, she was commissioned by the Alaska Arts Commission to create nested birch bark baskets for the recipients of the Governor's Award for the Arts.

Now in her late eighties, Belle Deacon continues to be an inspiration for her people and for all who view her work, but most particularly for those who have taken up this demanding art form. Her daughter Daisy Demientieff, and more recently Daisy's daughter often work alongside one another: a living example of how one generation learns from another and how traditions survive and flourish.

Nora Ezell

Nora Ezell was born in Mississippi in 1917, the fourth of ten children. The family moved to Birmingham, Alabama, where she spent her childhood, and later settled in Pickens County, where she worked at a variety of jobs, including chopping cotton. Mrs. Ezell grew up watching her mother, who was an expert seamstress, while she quilted. She remembers her mother calling "Nora Lee, come get this paper and fan me.... So I stood right there and fanned her while she quilted.... When I came to Pickens County, I became interested in quilts after watching my Aunt Toni."

In 1963 she and her husband moved to the Northeast, and there she worked in several textile manufacturing industries. She wanted to learn everything she could about sewing, and worked in drapery, upholstery, clothing and lingerie factories. She became accomplished in almost every facet of textile produc-

tion and prides herself in her ability to make everything herself except her shoes. "I did it on purpose," she says, "I worked in every factory I could work in so I learned to do everything." She also learned the techniques of crocheting, needlepoint, cross-stitching, petit point, crewel, hem stitching, knitting, and quilting.

Quilt scholar Gail Andrews Trechsel described Mrs. Ezell's quilting career: "Nora Ezell's first quilts were traditional pieced and appliqué patterns taken from printed sources or those made by family and friends. To get fabric to make her quilts, Mrs. Ezell would sell boxes of candy for the traveling salesman, taking cash or fabric in return for sales. In addition, she chopped cotton and often would take the scrap cotton left in the fields after picking to the gin where it was ginned for the seed and then could be used for batting. Mrs. Ezell's work expanded from the traditional vocabulary of pieced and appliqué quilts to pictorial quilts in the 1980s with the creation of the Martin Luther King quilt." The King quilt portrayed from her own memory many of the scenes of the Civil Rights Movement printed in the *Green County Democrat* on King's birthday in 1982 — the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Rosa Parks, and the bus boycott, and so on. "I had plenty of events and information to work with. I could have made a quilt that would have been as long as Dexter Avenue, just telling that story." The diary that she keeps while doing all her quilts showed that the King quilt took 550 hours to complete.

In Trechsel's words, "What makes Mrs. Ezell's quilts special is the skill with which they are worked and her ability to illustrate the essence of an event or person. Mrs. Ezell is a master of appliqué and of embroidery. In addition she has an unerring sense of color. Most of her pictorial quilts are appliqué and many of the blocks are elaborated with embroidered stitches."

Nora Ezell's work was featured in a one-woman show at Stillman College in 1986 and has been included in several exhibitions at the State Arts Council in Montgomery. Her Martin Luther King quilt and the Stillman College Centennial quilt were included in the national touring exhibit "Stitching Memories: African-American Story Quilts," organized by Williams College in Massachusetts. She received the Alabama Folk Heritage Award in 1990, and she has participated as a master instructor in the Alabama State Apprenticeship Program, though she says it is difficult to find students who will commit the necessary time to learn her patient art. She looks for students who, as she does, quilt "for the joy I get out of doing it. I put a part of me in everything I do. I love taking nothing and making something out of it."

Gerald Hawpetoss

Among the Menominee tribe of Wisconsin, certain ceremonial obligations have been "inherited" within families, passed on from one family generation to another. For the family of Gerald Hawpetoss, this meant that they were expected to produce the ancient Menominee style of finely-stitched and ornamented moccasins for other tribal members. In addition to their use for daily wear, the moccasin is of great importance to the Menominee, as there are many traditional beliefs associated with it. In the time of Gerald's grandmother, for example, the deceased were buried with a new pair of moccasins because it was felt that the person's spirit would be kept in this world until the moccasins deteriorated.

Gerald Hawpetoss, of Menominee and Potawatomi parentage, was born in 1953 and made his home in the community of Zor, a settlement in the remote western part of the Menominee reservation established in the last century by tribal members who rejected conversion to Christianity. At the age of eight, his father "gave" him to his great aunt and uncle with the hope that through being raised by them, he would learn many of the cherished tribal traditions from them and carry them into his peoples' future. His great-grandmother was an important Menominee moccasin maker and passed on her skills to his great aunt who, in turn, passed them on to Gerald. He learned every aspect of the moccasin-making process: tanning the deerskin in the traditional fashion, the three main types of moccasin design, the beadwork, quillwork, and ribbon applique designs selected from a large repertoire of traditional motifs particular

Left: Gerald Hawpetoss, photo by James Leary

Right: Fatima Kuinova, photo by Martin Koenig

to the many tribes and subgroups in the region. Today he is considered the outstanding traditional moccasin maker of the Menominee tribe. Though his creations are prized widely, his financial rewards are few since so many are given away —as tribal custom dictates—for occasions such as wedding and funerals.

In spite of his relative youth, he is also a master at beadwork, featherwork, and the making of all parts of the traditional Menominee dance regalia, including roach headdresses woven from porcupine and deer tail hair, elk horn headpieces, and dance bustles. He is currently the only fully knowledgeable and active maker of the fingerwoven beadwork widow's funerary ornament, the *osakapun*. He is also very knowledgeable about the meaning of his creations in terms of Menominee religion, as well as being an unsurpassed artisan in many traditional craft genres.

Since the mid-1980s, Gerald has felt a greater responsibility to pass on his special knowledge to others of his tribe. He currently teaches young Native Americans at the Indian Community School of Milwaukee. He has participated in the Wisconsin state folk arts apprenticeship program and has been listed in the state's artist-in-education directory. Heart surgery several years ago to correct a condition brought on by rheumatic fever added urgency to his cause. His faith in his Creator and in his people carry him forward. In his words, "As long as the Lord keeps me alive, it means that He still wants me to teach my traditions."

Fatima Kuinova

The Middle East (now also known as Central and West Asia) has for over a millennium been home to one of the world's great musical traditions. Among Arabic, Turkish, and Central Asian Jewish peoples this music is referred to as *maqam*, among Persians, *dastgah*. In some ways similar to the Indian *raga*, it is based on a system of modal scales with associated melodic themes, rhythmic modes, and extensive improvisation. While on one hand similarities of principles and musical practice argue for a connectedness—a Great Tradition—shared by Ottomans, Arabs, Persians, and others, the particulars of regional and local practice vary greatly and there are many distinctive local traditions within the larger whole. Fatima Kuinova is an internationally acclaimed proponent of *shashmaqam*, one of the most distinctive local musical traditions of the Bukharan Jews of Tadjikistan.

Fatima Kuinova was born in Samarkan, Tadjikistan in 1925, one of 10 children. Though her father, cantor of the local Bukharan Jewish synagogue, died when she was six years old, she credits him as her earliest and deepest musical influence. She began singing as a child, commenced vocal studies when she was 14, and made her first stage appearance when she was 16. By the time she was in her late teens, she was well on her way to an established career as a vocalist. For 27 years, Mrs. Kuinova belonged to an ensemble of women *rebab* (vertical violin) players. She toured widely with her ensemble to Kiev, Leningrad (St. Petersburg), and Moscow within the former Soviet Union and abroad to Europe, Afghanistan, and Iran, where she sang for the late Shah. In 1948 she was named a Merited Artist of the Soviet Union.

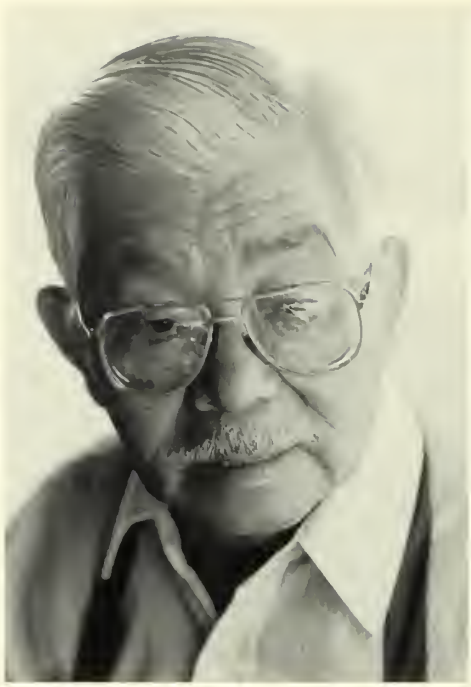
Because she was determined that her children would have opportunities unavailable to them in the Soviet Union, Mrs. Kuinova emigrated to the United States in 1981. She soon became a well-established member of the Bukharan Jewish musical community, often performing with just two other musicians and a dancer.

Fatima Kuinova is unarguably a performing artist of the highest calibre. In the words of ethnomusicologist Theodore Levin, "About Fatima's musical talents, there can be no cavil. Raised in a prestigious musical family, she is a first-rate interpreter of a little-known, but extraordinary musical Great Tradition. At the same time, she is at home in the folk traditions of urban Central Asia which comprise a common cultural heritage of Tadjiks, Uzbeks, and Bukharan Jews."

In New York City, her devotion to her music and to her American audiences has made her the cornerstone of the musical ensemble Shash-maqam. In the words of her daughter, performing "means a lot to my mother....She has a sort of conversation with the audience. She feels this contact." Working at first as a trio or quartet in which Fatima's vocal line was accompanied by two or more *doire*—the Central Asian frame drum—and *tar*—a plucked stringed instrument of the region—the ensemble has become a rallying point and a source of pride for the growing Bukharan Jewish community centered in Queens and Brooklyn. In New York, she performs for a variety of social occasions and concert

events, and she is in demand among Moslem émigrés as well as her own community. In 1986, Shashmaqam was invited to perform in the Salute to Immigrant Cultures at the Statue of Liberty Centennial, reflecting how quickly the Bukharan Jewish musical tradition has become a significant part of our nation cultural mosaic. It is a treasured tradition that Fatima Kuinova has both guarded and enhanced.

John Naka



In Asia, ways of categorizing art often defy translation into European concepts. In China and Japan, for example, there are a number of art forms that might be grouped together under the rubric "meditative" arts — arts that are usually practiced in solitude with the purpose of bettering one's self through art. The practice of these arts is an intensely personal experience and requires no audience, though substantial audiences are attracted to them. A classic example of this from China is the performance of the *guqin*, a nearly inaudible plucked zither similar in shape to the Japanese *koto*. In Japan, the most esteemed of these arts is *bonsai* (literally "dwarfed ancient trees in pots without landscape"), often referred to as "living sculpture."

Before John Naka began publicly displaying his works and teaching in Los Angeles in the 1950s, bonsai was practiced in the United States almost exclusively by Japanese Americans. The art form itself dates back to as early as 700 A.D. in China, from which it was introduced to Japan by Buddhist monks about 500 years later. The earlier Chinese form, *penjing* ("pot plants with landscape"), is still in use, though there are physical, aesthetic, and philosophical differences between the two traditions. In its early years in Japan, bonsai was the sole property of the samurai aristocracy. Later it spread to the middle classes and became a widely-accepted art form by the 1800s. Most bonsai today are based on five styles: formal upright, curved trunk, slanting, cascade, and "literati" (slender trunk and fewer branches) each with subvariations totaling more than 30 in all.

John Naka was born in Ft. Lupton, Colorado in 1914. At eight years of age, he moved to Japan with his parents so they could care for his aging grandfather. It was his grandfather who introduced young John to the art of bonsai. When John was 21, he returned to work as a farmer in Colorado where he was forced to remain during World War II. He met his wife, Alice, during this time. After the war, they moved to Los Angeles, where they lived next door to a disciple of bonsai, teacher Sam Tamekichi Doi. Under Doi's tutelage, Naka took up the art form in all seriousness. In the early 1950s, he began exhibiting his works to great acclaim, and he taught and lectured widely.

But John Naka yearned to spread the art of bonsai far beyond his own Japanese community. In 1976, he helped launch the National Bonsai Foundation that aimed to establish a permanent public display of North American bonsai at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. The million-dollar viewing pavilion became a reality (it was named after him), and in 1984 he donated his 11-juniper masterpiece "Goshin" (Spirit Guardian) to the Arboretum's collection. In 1985 the Emperor of Japan conferred upon him that country's highest award given to a non-citizen, The Fifth Class Order of the Rising Sun.

Today at age 78, John Naka continues to teach and promote his gentle, understated art. "What I like about bonsai is that it has a beginning, but no end," he says. "A bud today becomes a branch tomorrow. It is like searching for the rainbow's end; the farther it is pursued, the farther away it is. There are no borders in bonsai. The dove of peace flies to palace as to humble house, to young as old, to rich or poor. So does the spirit of bonsai."

Ng Sheung-Ch

The earliest and by far the largest immigration to the United States from China over the past 150 years was from the province of Canton (now Guangzhou) in the south of that immense country. There is great cultural variation in China from region to region; the Cantonese speak a language apart from the "official" Mandarin of the north and have their own distinctive folk traditions. One of the most important of these village-based traditions is the genre of unac-

Left: John Naka,
photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Times

Center: Ng Sheung-Chi,
photo by Corky Lee

Right: Marc Savoy,
photo by Stephen Fitzstephens

companied song called *muk'yu.* Muk'yu texts speak of the joys and vicissitudes of everyday life, and as such, embody the experiences of both those who emigrated and those who stayed at home.

One of those who chose to come to the "Golden Mountain," as the United States is called, was Ng Sheung-Chi, who has been recognized in both China and the United States as a master performer of muk'yu. Mr. Ng was born in 1910 in a small village in Taishan County, Canton. He spent most of his life as a farmer before immigrating to the U.S. in 1979. By the age of 18, Ng was already known as a fine muk'yu singer among his fellow villagers. He was frequently invited to sing at weddings, gatherings, and ceremonies. More often, he just sang for his own pleasure in the fields or at home. Following the political changes of the 1940s in China, however, most singing of muk'yu was prohibited and the tradition began a sharp decline. Ng Sheung-Chi persisted nevertheless, and in later years he was often invited to sing at large gatherings. In his words, "These meetings were very large meetings, often with three or four thousand people. Usually, it took a long time to have folks gathered for these meetings; but when they knew that today Uncle Ng [as he was called] was coming to sing, they would all come very early, waiting at the meeting place."

Today, many young Chinese both in China and the United States do not know of the vast repertoire and past importance of the muk'yu tradition. Many muk'yu texts are improvised for the occasion, while others are kept in songbooks. Scholar Su de San Zheng points out that "The earliest extant printed muk'yu textbook dates from 1713. Muk'yu texts are sung to repeated tunes with improvisational variations. Its music has both a singing mode and a reciting mode." When Mr. Ng came to this country, he brought with him many of his old songbooks and memories. When not working in the garment factories of New York's Chinatown, he could be found singing his songs for other elderly Cantonese in parks or in senior citizen's homes. In addition to the traditional repertoire of love stories, Mr. Ng particularly favors those songs that recount the experiences of his fellow Chinese immigrants. Soon after arriving in America, he wrote a new muk'yu song entitled "Uncle Ng Comes to the Golden Mountain."

In more recent years, Ng Sheung-Chi has produced copies of muk'yu texts and recordings of his songs to share his musical memories with those who are interested. He is often invited to sing for public cultural events and is currently the subject of a documentary film on his art form. Among some young Chinese Americans in New York, he is seen as a symbol of deep cultural roots in the village life of China's past.

Marc Savoy

Marc Savoy—accordion maker, musician, and cultural advocate—often expresses himself as a man who stands between two worlds—the Cajun world of the past and the Cajun world of the future. He was born and raised on an isolated rice farm in the rich cultural milieu forged by French-speaking Acadian (from which the term "Cajun" derives) refugees from eastern Canada who immigrated to the shores and fields of Louisiana in the late 18th century. At the age of seven, he first heard his grandfather take out his fiddle and play it, and he remembers saying to himself, "When I grow up, I want to make sounds like that." After then, he could be found often at his grandfather's house, listening to the old folks reminisce about the past or, if he was lucky, witnessing a jam session with other now legendary musicians such as Dennis McGee.

But Marc's growing interest in his own people's music came at a time when the music's popularity was in rapid decline, reflecting a disintegration of Cajun culture as a whole. "It was as though the younger folks were under some pressure to become something they thought they should be and were giving up their culture as a result....To me, it was as though they were giving up a delicious bowl of gumbo for a cold and tasteless hot dog. To say that I spent my school days like a stranger in a crowd would be an understatement. I would have been the laughingstock of my school, had it been known that I listened to and liked Cajun music."

Young Marc was intrigued by the accordion. He fixed up an old one to play, and the word spread that "Joel Savoy's boy" was fixing accordions. Later, his father bought him a new instrument from the Sears Roebuck catalogue for $27.50. From then on Marc's progress was fast. "With all the music that I had soaked into me before my new accordion arrived, it was only natural that some had to leak out through my fingers on the buttons...There were certain things I wanted to do, but my instrument

couldn't keep up with me." Eventually, he decided to build his own accordion. "So, with a few instruments such as Db meters, electronic tuners, a few pressure gauges, and my mother's vacuum cleaner, I commenced to determine what effect I wanted to create....How could I create a powerful tone, but still be able to swell a note without portamento effect?"

In 1965 Marc opened a music store and went full time into the business of building accordions for Cajun musical tastes. He performed and demonstrated his instrument-making skills widely and to great acclaim throughout the United States and Canada. His contacts with like-minded people concerned with preserving their heritage reinforced his own efforts at working for the survival of Cajun culture. In the words of Cajun scholar Barry Ancelet, "For Marc Savoy, Cajun music and accordions represent a medium he has chosen to express a deeper, more important commitment to the survival of traditional culture. Motivated by a firm sense of loyalty to the grassroots and an unyielding drive for excellence, he is involved in a struggle for the dignity of the folk arts."

Othar Turner

African-American fife and drum music of northern Mississippi is felt by some scholars to be the most deeply-rooted African style of music still being played in the Untied States. It is certainly one of the rarest. In Africa, flute and drum ensembles are found in many areas, and in the English-speaking Caribbean, similar fife and drum music played for processions at carnival time can still be heard. Ethnomusicologist David Evans traces the style back to a combination of European-derived militia music of colonial times, during which there were many accounts of black fifers and drummers, and African usages and rhythmic principles. As late as the middle of this century, it could be found in Harris County, Georgia, west Tennessee, and Panola and Tate counties in Mississippi. Today, however, there are but two known surviving practitioners of this ancient musical style in the United States—Napoleon Strickland and the man from whom he learned, Othar Turner.

Othar Turner was born in 1908 in Canton, Mississippi, east of Jackson. Except for a nine-month excursion to work laying and repairing track as far north as Indiana, he has lived his entire life in and around Gravel Springs, which straddles the Panola-Tate County line, laboring as a small farmer. "I been out on the farm a good while and raised six kids, and I don't know how many other people."

He made his first cane fife when he was 13. He had already learned a good deal about the drumming from old drum players in the area and he wanted to move on to the fife. He picked his cane from the ditch bank, cut it to the right width and length—a little over a foot long with several joints in the right places—and bored six holes in it with a red hot rod, five finger holes and a sixth for the mouthpiece. He experimented until he got the right intonation. Since then he has made countless fifes for others.

His band, the Rising Star Fife and Drum Band, is comprised of the fife and three drums—two kettles (snare drums) of different sizes and a bass. The high-pitched kettle is the lead drum. All the instruments are played standing up and often while walking around, with the fife leading the way. The musical repertoire is a mixture of blues, old popular tunes, spirituals, and instrumental pieces, collectively known as "Shimmy She Wobble" for the liberating effect they have on the dancers.

The most common performers settings are "picnics," large community gatherings at which there is plenty of food, camaraderie, and dancing to the music of the fife and drums. Fife and drum picnics have been going on for as long as anyone in the area can remember. They are family affairs where old friends gather, as well as those who drive down for the weekend from Memphis, St. Louis, and Chicago. Othar Turner himself organizes picnics around the Fourth of July and Labor Day, starting them off at first light on Saturday and playing no later than midnight, out of respect for the Sabbath. "Way I introduce [my picnic]...I walk right out on the hill out there and play them drums...and man, folks be coming from everywhere...the cars be lined up that road from up yonder all the way on down to where my truck was, just laughing and talking, man, and them drums be playing music, they just enjoy."

Since the mid 70s, however, Turner's music has been more in demand among presenters outside the region. He has appeared at the Mid-South Folklife Festival in Memphis, the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, the World Music Institute in New York, in the film "Gravel Springs Fife and Drum" (South Bound series), and on several recordings.

Left: Othar Turner, photo by Axel Küstner

Right: T. Viswanathan, photo by Nancy Walz

T. Viswanathan

The music of India has two main systems: North Indian or Hindustani and South Indian or Karnatic. Even though the two systems are based on common concepts such as *raga* (melodic mode) and *tala* (rhythmic meter), the style of ornamentation, the musical forms, the favored modes, and other performance traits differ from each other. When Ravi Shankar introduced Indian music to countless Americans in the 1960s, he played in the Hindustani style. The Karnatic style, less well known in the United States and often called India's "soul music" for its directness, is represented by an artist similarly revered within his own Indo-American community, flutist T. Viswanathan.

Viswanathan comes from one of the most illustrious music and dance families of South India. His grandmother, Veen Dhanammal, was considered to be one of the finest *vina* (plucked zither) players of this century, and his sister, the late T. Balasaraswati, was regarded as the greatest exponent of *Bharata Natyam*, South Indian classical dance. Viswanathan learned his family's musical repertoire and studied for over 20 years with the famed flutist T.N. Swaminatha Pillai. His instrument, the *kuzhal*, is made of bamboo and has seven or eight holes. The basic pitch of the instrument depends on the length. The flute has no metal keys; its subtle ornamentation is produced by the position of the fingers over the holes and by movement of the head.

For over 40 years Viswanathan has toured India, Europe, and North America both as a solo performer and as accompanist for his sister. In 1961 he performed in the milestone East-West Encounter in Tokyo, and in 1963 at the Edinburgh Festival. Living in the United States for the past 25 years, he has played an extremely important role in the musical life of Indo Americans, performing regularly for his community and for the general public. He has long been a gracious teacher, and is widely known as a generous man, kind and pure of heart.

In the words of Ralph Samuelson, Asian music expert and director of the Asian Cultural Council in New York City, "He represents a special family tradition noted for its purity of style in music and dance over many generations, eschewing modern trends that all too often are shifting these art forms in more superficial directions." A review appearing in the *Economic Times* of Bombay stated that "Viswa brings a magic touch to the flute...[His] music is almost a great spiritual experience that is difficult to analyze. What stands out is his conviction and certainty that gets translated into a neat execution....But the uppermost feeling is that his own deep and personal yearning permeates the music and ennobles even the listener."

Acknowledgements

The 1992 National Heritage Fellowships concert, reception on Capitol Hill, and other related events were supported by a generous contribution from the J.C. Penney Company. The events were coordinated and planned with the assistance of the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA), a private non-profit corporation founded in 1933 and dedicated to the presentation and documentation of folk and traditional arts in the United States. The National Endowment for the Arts is grateful for their invaluable assistance, and would also like to thank the following individuals:

Carol Atuk-Derrick
Robert Browning
Joey Brackner
Mary Cliff
Robert Friedman
Bobby Fulcher
Dave Gallagher
Robert Garfias
Eric Johnson
Erin Kellen
Mary Beth Kirchner
Michael Kline
James Leary
Bob Lee
Living Blues
Richard March
David Nelson
Judy Peiser
Ethel Raim
Su De San Zheng
C. Bruce Schwartz, M.D.
Gail Trechsel
Andy Wallace
Hank Willett
Maria Williams
Gerry Yoshitomi
Eleanor Yung

The National Heritage Fellows 1982-1991

1982

Dewey Balfa*
Cajun Fiddler
Basile, LA

Joe Heaney*
Irish Singer
Brooklyn, NY

Tommy Jarrell*
Appalachian Fiddler
Mt. Airy, NC

Bessie Jones*
Georgia Sea Island Singer
Brunswick, GA

George Lopez
Santos Woodcarver
Cordova, NM

Brownie McGhee
Blues Guitarist
Oakland, CA

Hugh McGraw
Shape Note Singer
Bremen, GA

Lydia Mendoza
Mexican-American Singer
Houston, TX

Bill Monroe
Bluegrass Musician
Nashville, TN

Elijah Pierce*
Carver/Painter
Columbus, OH

Adam Popovich
Tamburitza Musician
Dolton, IL

Georgeann Robinson*
Osage Ribbonworker
Bartlesville, OK

Duff Severe
Western Saddlemaker
Pendleton, OR

Philip Simmons
Ornamental Ironworker
Charleston, SC

Sanders "Sonny" Terry*
Blues Musician
Holliswood, NY

1983

Sister Mildred Barker*
Shaker Singer
Poland Springs, ME

Rafael Cepeda
Bomba Musician/Dancer
Santurce, PR

Ray Hicks
Appalachian Storyteller
Banner Elk, NC

Stanley Hicks*
Appalachian Musician/Storyteller/
Instrument Maker
Vilas, NC

John Lee Hooker
Blues Guitarist/Singer
San Carlos, CA

Mike Manteo*
Sicilian Marionettist
Staten Island, NY

Narciso Martinez*
Texas-Mexican Accordionist/Composer
San Benito, TX

Lanier Meaders
Potter
Cleveland, GA

Almeda Riddle*
Ballad Singer
Greers Ferry, AR

Simon St. Pierre
French-American Fiddler
Smyrna Mills, ME

Joe Shannon
Irish Piper
Chicago, IL

Alex Stewart*
Cooper/Woodworker
Sneedville, TN

Ada Thomas
Chitimacha Basketmaker
Charenton, LA

Lucinda Toomer*
Black Quilter
Columbus, GA

Lem Ward*
Decoy Carver/Painter
Crisfield, MD

Dewey Williams
Shape Note Singer
Ozark, AL

1984

Clifton Chenier*
Creole Accordionist
Lafayette, LA

Bertha Cook*
Knotted Bedspread Maker
Boone, NC

Joseph Cormier
Cape Breton Violinist
Waltham, MA

Elizabeth Cotten*
Black Songster/Songwriter
Syracuse, NY

Burlon Craig
Potter
Vale, NC

Albert Fahlbusch
Hammered Dulcimer Maker/Player
Scottsbluff, NE

Janie Hunter
Black Singer/Storyteller
Johns Island, SC

Mary Jane Manigault
Black Seagrass Basket Maker
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Genevieve Mougin*
Lebanese-American Lace Maker
Bettendorf, IA

Martin Mulvihill*
Irish-American Fiddler
Bronx, NY

Howard "Sandman" Sims
Black Tap Dancer
New York, NY

Ralph Stanley
Appalachian Banjo Player/Singer
Coeburn, VA

Margaret Tafoya
Santa Clara Pueblo Potter
Espanola, NM

Dave Tarras*
Klezmer Clarinetist
Brooklyn, NY

Paul Tiulana
Eskimo Maskmaker/Dancer/Singer
Anchorage, AK

Cleofes Vigil*
Hispanic Storyteller/Singer
San Cristobal, NM

Emily Kau'i Zuttermeister
Hula Master
Kaneohe, HI

1985

Eppie Archuleta
Hispanic Weaver
San Luis Valley, CO

Periklis Halkias
Greek Clarinetist
Astoria, Queens, NY

Jimmy Jausoro
Basque Accordionist
Boise, ID

Mealii Kalama*
Hawaiian Quilter
Honolulu, HI

Lily May Ledford*
Appalachian Musician/Singer
Lexington, KY

Leif Melgaard*
Norwegian Woodcarver
Minneapolis, MN

Bua Xou Mua
Hmong Musician
Portland, OR

Julio Negron-Rivera
Puerto Rican Instrument Maker
Morovis PR

Alice New Holy Blue Legs
Lakota Sioux Quill Artist
Oglala, SD

Glenn Ohrlin
Cowboy Singer/Storyteller/Illustrator
Mountain View, AR

Henry Townsend
Blues Musician/Songwriter
St. Louis, MO

Horace "Spoons" Williams*
Spoons/Bones Player/Poet
Philadelphia, PA

1986

Alfonse "Bois Sec" Ardoin
Black Creole Accordionist
Eunice, LA

Earnest Bennett
Anglo-American Whittler
Indianapolis, IN

Helen Cordero
Pueblo Potter
Cochiti, NM

Sonia Domsch
Czech-American Bobbin Lace Maker
Atwood, KS

Canray Fontenot
Black Creole Fiddler
Welsh, LA

John Jackson
Black Songster/Guitarist
Fairfax Station, VA

Peou Khatna
Cambodian Court Dancer/Choreographer
Silver Spring, MD

Valerio Longoria
Mexican-American Accordionist
San Antonio, TX

Joyce Doc Tate Nevaquaya
Comanche Indian Flutist
Apache, OK

Luis Ortega
Hispanic-American Rawhide Worker
Paradise, CA

Ola Belle Reed
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Rising Sun, MD

Jenny Thlunaut*
Tlingit Chilkat Blanket Weaver
Haines, AK

Nimrod Workman
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Mascot, TN/Chattaroy, WV

1987

Juan Alindato
Carnival Maskmaker
Ponce, PR

Louis Bashell
Slovenian Accordionist/Polka Master
Greenfield, WI

Genoveva Castellanoz
Mexican-American Corona Maker
Nyssa, OR

Thomas Edison "Brownie" Ford
Anglo-Comanche Cowboy Singer/Storyteller
Hebert, LA

Kansuma Fujima
Japanese-American Dancer
Los Angeles, CA

Claude Joseph Johnson*
African-American Religious Singer/Orator
Atlanta, GA

Raymond Kane
Hawaiian Slack Key Guitarist/Singer
Wai'anae, HI

Wade Mainer
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Flint, MI

Sylvester McIntosh
Crucian Singer/Bandleader
St. Croix, VI

Allison "Totie" Montana
Mardi Gras Chief/Costume Maker
New Orleans, LA

Alex Moore, Sr.*
African-American Blues Pianist
Dallas, TX

Emilio and Senaida Romero
Hispanic-American Craftsworkers in Tin and Embroidery
Santa Fe, NM

Newton Washburn
Split Ash Basketmaker
Littleton, NH

1988

Pedro Ayala*
Mexican-American Accordionist
Donna, TX

Kepka Belton
Czech-American Egg Painter
Ellsworth, KS

Amber Densmore
New England Quilter/Needleworker
Chelsea, VT

Michael Flatley
Irish-American Stepdancer
Palos Park, IL

Sister Rosalia Haberl
German-American Bobbin Lacemaker
Hankinson, ND

John Dee Holeman
African-American Dancer/Musician/Singer
Durham, NC

Albert "Sunnyland Slim" Luandrew
African-American Blues Pianist/Singer
Chicago, IL

Yang Fang Nhu
Hmong Weaver/Embroiderer
Detroit, MI

Kenny Sidle
Anglo-American Fiddler
Newark, OH

Willie Mae Ford Smith
African-American Gospel Singer
St. Louis, MO

Clyde "Kindy" Sproat
Hawaiian Cowboy Singer/Ukulele Player
Kapa'au, HI

Arthel "Doc" Watson
Appalachian Guitar Player/Singer
Deep Gap, NC

1989

John Cephas
Piedmont Blues Guitarist/Singer
Woodford, VA

The Fairfield Four
African-American a capella Gospel Singers
Nashville, TN

Jose Gutierrez
Mexican Jarocho Musician/Singer
Norwalk, CA

Richard Avedis Hagopian
Armenian Oud Player
Visalia, CA

Christy Hengel
German-American Concertina Maker
New Ulm, MN

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Pontic Greek Lyra Player
Norwalk, CT

Ethel Kvalheim
Norwegian Rosemaler
Stoughton, WI

Vanessa Paukeigope Morgan
Kiowa Regalia Maker
Anadarko, OK

Mabel E. Murphy
Anglo-American Quilter
Fulton, MO

LaVaughn E. Robinson
African-American Tapdancer
Philadelphia, PA

Earl Scruggs
Bluegrass Banjo Player
Madison, TN

Harry V. Shourds
Widfowl Decoy Carver
Seaville, NJ

Chesley Goseyun Wilson
Apache Fiddle Maker
Tucson, AZ

1990

Howard Armstrong
African-American String Band Musician
Detroit, MI

Em Bun
Cambodian Silk Weaver
Harrisburg, PA

Natividad Cano
Mexican Mariachi Musician
Monterey Park, CA

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Belleville, NJ

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Kamuela, HI

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Cowboy Poet
Forsyth, MT

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Finnish Accordionist
Mass City, MI

Emilio Rosado
Woodcarver
Utuado, PR

Robert Spicer
Flatfoot Dancer
Dickson, TN

Douglas Wallin
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Marshall, NC

1991

Etta Baker
African-American guitarist
Morgantown, NC

George Blake
Native American craftsman (Hupa-Yurok)
Hoopa, CA

Jack Coen
Irish-American flautist
Bronx, NY

Rose Frank
Native American cornhusk weaver (Nez Perce)
Lapwai, ID

Eduardo "Lalo" Guerrero
Mexican-American singer/guitarist/composer
Cathedral City, CA

Khamvong Insixiengmai
Southeast Asian singer (Lao)
Fresno, CA

Don King
Western saddlemaker
Sheridan, WY

Riley "B.B." King
African-American bluesman
Itta Bena, MI and Las Vegas, NV

Esther Littlefield
Alaskan regalia maker (Tlingit)
Sitka, AK

Seisho "Harry" Nakasone
Okinawan-American musician
Honolulu, HI

Irvan Perez
Isleno (Canary Island) singer
Poydras, LA

Morgan Sexton *
Appalachian banjo player/singer
Linefork, KY

Nikitas Tsimouris
Greek-American musician (bagpipe player)
Tarpon Springs, FL

Gussie Wells
African-American quilter
Oakland, CA

Arbie Williams
African-American quilter
Oakland, CA

Melvin Wine
Appalachian fiddler
Copen, WV

* (deceased)